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Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 37 (c)

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America: revised draft resolution

Early warning capacities of the United Nations system with regard to natural disasters

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992 and 48/57 of 14 December 1993,

Recalling the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, 1/ the outcome of the World Conference On Natural Disaster Reduction, held at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994, and specifically that early warnings and the effective dissemination of such information are key factors to successful disaster prevention and preparedness,

Considering the very large number of lives lost and the high amount of material damage that occurs yearly, caused by natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment,

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1/ E/1994/85, annex II.

Convinced of the need to increase awareness, prevention and mitigation of and preparedness for natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment,

Taking into account already existing early-warning capacities within the United Nations system, in particular within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Conscious of the need to avoid a duplication of work among United Nations bodies dealing with early-warning capacities,

Mindful that early warning for the prevention and mitigation of and preparedness for natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment is important for all countries, especially the developing countries,

Reaffirming that sustained economic growth and sustainable development are essential for the prevention of and the preparedness against natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment, and that special attention should be given to disaster prevention and preparedness by Governments concerned as well as by the international community,

1. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on early-warning capacities within the United Nations system and to make proposals on how they may be improved and better coordinated in order to provide for an adequate response to natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment and, in this context, also to make concrete proposals on the transfer of technologies related to early warning, in particular to developing countries, taking into account chapter 34 of Agenda 21, 2/ as well as the Principles of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World; 1/

2. Also requests the Secretary-General to include in his report recommendations on the capacity of the United Nations system to coordinate effectively information about natural disasters and similar disasters with an adverse impact on the environment and to pass on this information to regional, national and sectoral early-warning capacities.

2/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.